

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 06228 032132Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 L-03 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
DOTE-00 FMC-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09
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R 031906Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2900

UNCLAS CARACAS 6228

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EWWT VE
SUBJECT: PORT CONGESTION: PUERTO CABELLO

REF: (A) STATE 155896 (B) CARACAS 3878 (C) STATE 103618

1. AS OF FRIDAY, JUNE 30, PORT CONDITIONS IN VENEZUELA'S MAJOR
PORTS WERE AS FOLLOWS:
PUERTO CABELLO: ELEVEN VESSELS AWAITING BERTH SPACE.
NINETEEN AT DOCK.

LA GUAIRA: FOUR VESSELS AWAITING BERTH SPACE, NINETEEN AT DOCK.

MARACAIBO: SIX VESSELS AWAITING BERTH SPACE, SEVEN AT DOCK.

GUANTA: NO VESSELS AWAITING BERTH SPACE, FIVE AT DOCK.

2. EMBASSY DISINCLINED TO ASK INP'S OPINION AS TO PORT SUR-
CHARGES. PRESIDENT OF INP, SAMANIEGO, HAS STATED IN PRESS
ARTICLES THAT HE BELIEVES PORT CONGESTION SURCHARGES SHOULD
BE REDUCED OR DEROGATED.

3. AS TO IMPROVEMENT IN PORT CONDITIONS, SEVERAL FACTORS OUGHT
TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. INP HAS TRIED TO IMPROVE
IN TWO AREAS: CAPITAL INVESTMENTS AND PORT PROCEDURES/
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MANAGEMENT. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN ORTHCOMING AND
ARE CONTINUING SPECIALLY IN PUERTO CABELLO WHICH IS DE FACTO
VENEZUELA'S PRIORITY PROT. INCREASED INVESTMENT IN EQUIPMENT
HAS ALSO HELPED. HOWEVER, SHORTAGE OF ADEQUATE STORAGE SPACE
STILL EXISTS. AS FOR PORT PROCEDURES AND MANAGEMENT, LABOR
PRODUCTIVITY STILL IS ABNORMALLY LOW; CUSTOMS PROCEDURES
STILL ARE ABNORMALLY BURDENSOME; AND PILFERAGE STILL EXISTS.

HOWEVER, INP'S POLICY OF RETOUTING SHIPS HAS ASDED ADDITIONAL
BERTH SPACES TO VENEZUELA TOTAL ABILITY TO SERVICE VESSELS.
TRAFFIC CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE IN SPETEMBER-DECEMBER CYCLE
AS CHRISTMAS FOODSTUFFS ARE IMPORTED. HOWEVER, ONE MAJOR REASON FOR
A DECREASE IN PORT CONGESTION HAS BEEN A DECIDEDLY LARGE
DECREASE IN OVERALL TRAFFIC. THIS LOWER LEVEL OF IMPORTATION MAY BE
EXPECTED THROUGH JULY 1979. MAJOR PROJECT IMPORTS ARE NOW
BEING MOSTLY DIRECTED TO THE ORINOCO RIVER PORTS, PUNTO FIJO
AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT AREAS WHICH DO NOT AFFECT VENEZUELA'S
FOUR MAJOR PORTS. THE CONGESTION ON THE ORINOCO RIVER CAN
BE EXPECTED TO WORSEN AS GURI DAM IMPORTS BEGIN TO ARRIVE.
CROWLEY

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